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COUNTRY	Austria	REPORT NO	[REDACTED] 15
TOPIC	Interview of Dr.Kraus (VdU) with the Soviet Commandant in Lower Austria		
25X1X			
EVALUATION	[REDACTED]	PLACE OBTAINED	[REDACTED] 25X1A
DATE OF CONTE	[REDACTED]		
DATE OBTAINED	[REDACTED]	DATE PREPARED	27 June 1950
REFERENCES	25X1C		
PAGES	1	ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)	
REMARKS			

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1. Dr. Kraus, chief of the VdU stated that, because of the depressed atmosphere in VdU circles in Lower Austria resulting from the inflammatory campaign of the Communists and wide-spread fear of the Soviets, he called upon the Soviet commanding officer in Lower Austria. In the course of their conversation kraus asked the Soviet commander whether the Soviet occupation authority was opposed to communal elections and whether it wanted to prevent participation of the VdU in these elections. The Soviet officer, who obviously disliked this question, declared very politely that the Soviet occupation authorities have made it a principle not to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Austrians and this applies also to elections. According to Dr.Kraus, the Soviet officer stated that it is the responsibility of the Minister of the Interior to take action against anyone on political grounds. The only point to be clarified is the question of whether the Austrian people themselves object to the VdU.
2. From this answer Dr.Kraus inferred that the Soviets are intent on making it appear as though they are strict in observing agreements while they continue to employ the Communists against the VdU, justifying these actions as the "will of the people". In any event, this interview somewhat encouraged the depressed VdU followers, for they saw that the leader of the party was not afraid to approach the Soviet commanding officer directly.
3. Dr. Kraus further stated that the discussion between him and the Soviet officer was conducted in Russian and in a very jovial atmosphere.

Document No.	004
No Change In Class	
Declassified	
Class. Changed To	TS S C
Auth.	HR 70-2
Date	1 JUN 1978
By	1215

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Next Review Date: 2008

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